Mr. Watson

MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
FEBRUARY 15, 1961

ORDER OF BUSINESS

9:30 a.m. 1. CONVENE, ROOM 7000, INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING

2. SUBMISSIONS-INTERVIEWS

9:35 a.m. a. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION, PUBLIC BUILDINGS SERVICE: (MR. V. ROWLAND SNYDER, MR. ZERNICKI, GENERAL SVCS. ADMIN, PUB. BLDGS. SVC.)

Proposed Cooling Tower in Courtyard of Internal Revenue Building

10:00 a.m. b. AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION: (Mr. John Harbeson, architect; General Thomas North, Secretary, ABMC)

Sculpture for Neuville Cemetery, France

10:30 a.m. c. BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA: (Mr. Charles M. Heistand, Asst. Chief Scout Executive, Boy Scouts of America; Mr. Donald De Lue, Sculptor; Commissioner Robert E. McLaughlin; Mr. T. Sutton Jett, Associate Superintendent, Mr. Robert C. Horne, Chief, Div. of Design and Construction, Mr. William M. Haussmann, Chief, Architectural Branch, National Capital Parks)

Boy Scout Memorial

11:00 a.m. d. DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL, HERALDIC BRANCH: (Lt Col Troy E. Whiting, Heraldic Officer, Army Dept.)

Coast Guard Distinguished Service Medal

ADJOURN

January 18, 1961

Dear Mr. Floete:

The members of the Commission, at the time of their recent meeting, viewed the eight mural paintings by Nicolai Cikovsky and Ernest Fiene in the second floor corridor of the Interior Department building which have recently been repaired and in some cases extensively repainted. The members felt that the paintings have been greatly damaged, perhaps irreparably; and this view has been confirmed by Mr. Francis Sullivan, the restorer at the National Gallery of Art, who has also viewed the paintings.

I should also call attention to the mural paintings by Gerald Nailor and Allan Houser in the penthouse on top of the Interior Department building. The plaster has cracked in places and the paintings are peeling for lack of care. The space is being used as an office with clocks affixed to the walls over the paintings, and furniture backed against them.

All of these paintings are by distinguished artists. I am informed that panel paintings by Mr. Fiene and Mr. Cikovsky have sold for from $3,000 to $10,000 each. The value of the large mural paintings can be judged accordingly.

The members of the Commission feel that this neglect of the Government's works of art should not be allowed to continue. The Commission has on several previous occasions expressed its concern to the Public Buildings Service of the General Services Administration and has recommended that a qualified restorer be employed either by the year or on contract to care for the paintings which the Government owns outside of the museums. I enclose copies of letters to Mr. Reynolds, Commissioner of Public Buildings and to Mr. Hilder dated respectively January 16, 1952 and June 5, 1953.

I should like to urge again that some action be taken to provide an experienced and qualified restorer to prevent deterioration and

EXHIBIT A

destruction of valuable government property which has been created by some of the most distinguished artists in this country. I think it would also be fair to have the artists view the paintings and give them an opportunity to repair them if possible. They are all living except Gerald Nailor. I would appreciate it if you would advise me what can be done in this matter.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Honorable Franklin Floete
Administrator
General Services Administration
Washington 25, D. C.

def/lrw/b

cc-Commr. of Public Buildings Service
Asst. Commr. for Planning & Design
Public Buildings Service

At the meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts held on 14 February 1961, the members again discussed the condition of existing paintings and murals in government buildings in Washington, D. C., particularly those in the Department of the Interior building. After considering the question at some length, the Commission adopted the following resolution:

R E S O L V E D

THAT, WHEREAS, the members of the Commission of Fine Arts have viewed with concern the state of mural paintings by Nicolai Cikovsky and Ernest Fiene in the Interior Department building, which have recently been repaired, and, in some cases extensively repainted, some of the paintings perhaps having been irreparably damaged; and,

WHEREAS, other paintings, such as those by Gerald Nailor and Allan Houser in the penthouse of the Interior Department building are threatened with damage by neglect, especially by cracks in the walls; and

WHEREAS, The Commission of Fine Arts has, repeatedly, expressed its concern about proper care for the paintings in Public Buildings to the General Services Administration, and has recommended that a qualified restorer be employed either by the year or by contract to care for the paintings which the Government owns in buildings outside of museums;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That these recommendations be renewed and that the General Services Administration be urged to secure the services of a well-qualified restorer for the purposes mentioned above;

Now, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That in cases where the painter is still living he be given the opportunity to repair his own work.

EXHIBIT A1

27 February 1961

Dear Mr. Wallace:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on February 14, 1961, met with representatives of the Public Buildings Service, General Services Administration, to consider the proposed location and design of an air conditioning cooling tower to be erected in a courtyard of the Internal Revenue Service Building in the Federal Triangle.

The members of the Commission were disappointed to learn that the cost of locating a central cooling tower behind the present Coast Guard Building, as previously approved, was considered prohibitive, and for this reason it was proposed to erect smaller separate cooling towers for the buildings in the Federal Triangle, rather than one central plant as originally planned. The difficulties involved in the construction of such a facility were recognized and the necessity for changing the plan, which the Commission had previously approved was accepted. The proposed location of the cooling tower in the courtyard of the Internal Revenue Building was approved, provided there can be a suitable design of the structure.

The Commission could not recommend the design as submitted. In designing the cooling tower as a single mass, an unnecessarily large volume for the size of the courtyard was created. It was suggested that studies be made as to whether the required capacity could not be achieved by combining a number of smaller units rather than using a single large unit. This procedure, the members believe, would afford the opportunity to arrange the smaller units in an architectural pattern that could be better related to the design of the courtyard. This idea was explained to Mr. Snyder, who was asked to have a restudy of the design made as suggested.

The Commission will be glad to review the results of these studies whenever they have been prepared.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Honorable Karl E. Wallace
Commissioner
Public Buildings Service
General Services Administration
Washington 25, D.C.

EXHIBIT B

17 February 1961

Dear General North:

The Commission of Fine Arts was glad to meet with you and Mr. John Harbeson, architectural advisor to the American Battle Monuments Commission, at its meeting on February 15, 1961, concerning a further change in the treatment of the north exterior wall of the American Memorial at Neuville-en-Condroz, France.

The members of the Commission considered that use of a classical helmet and wreath, carved in stone, would be appropriate, and approved the design for this feature as presented in the photographs of the plaster model.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Major General Thomas North
Secretary
American Battle Monuments Commission
Room 2013 Munitions Building
Washington 25, D. C.

EXHIBIT C

NEWS RELEASE
COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

WASHINGTON: 16 February 1961 - The Commission of Fine Arts met on February 15 with Mr. Donald De Lue, sculptor, and Mr. William Henry Deacy, architect, for the Boy Scout Memorial. The Commission saw for the first time the design of the proposed memorial and were able to consider it in relation to the various sites previously approved by the Secretary of the Interior and the National Capital Planning Commission.

Recognizing the desire of the Boy Scouts to erect the memorial in the area bordering the Ellipse south of the White House in order to have access to this recreational area for their meetings and other activities, the Commission recommended a site in this location on the east-west axis of the Ellipse either on the 17th or 15th street side, provided the memorial would not be on axis with the Washington Monument nor in the Ellipse, itself. As an alternate site, the Commission recommended consideration of the Overlook at the termination of the 10th Street Mall, a suggestion which has been favorably received by the Redevelopment Land Agency.

The Commission asked that the sculptor restudy the design for the memorial in relation to the sites recommended.

EXHIBIT D

16 February 1961

Dear Mr. Heistand:

The members of the Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on February 15 were glad to meet with you and Commissioner McLaughlin, and also Mr. Donald De Lue, sculptor, and Mr. William H. Deacy, architect, for the Boy Scout memorial. The members of the Commission saw for the first time the design of the proposed memorial and were able to consider it in relation to the various sites previously approved by the Secretary of the Interior and the National Capital Planning Commission.

Recognizing the desire of the Boy Scouts to erect the memorial in the area bordering the Ellipse south of the White House in order to have access to this recreational area for their meetings and other activities, the members of the Commission later in the day visited the Ellipse. As a result of their visit, the Commission recommended a site on the east-west axis of the Ellipse either on the 17th or 15th street side, provided the memorial would not be on axis of the Washington Monument, or in the Ellipse, itself. The Commission believes that a site on the east-west axis of the Ellipse would create a formal relationship with the Ellipse and also would provide a better setting in the trees.

As an alternate site the Commission recommended consideration of the Overlook at the southern termination of the 10th Street Mall which would afford an appropriate site. This suggestion was favorably received by the Redevelopment Land Agency.

The sculptor of the memorial was asked to restudy the design in relation to the sites recommended. The Commission realizes that the Boy Scouts wish to complete their plans at the earliest possible date and will be glad to work with the sculptor and the architect to that end.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley, Chairman

Mr. Charles M. Heistand
Assistant Chief Scout Executive
Boy Scouts of America
New Brunswick, New Jersey

cc-Chmn, Nat. Cap. Planning Commn
Director, National Park Service
President, Board of D.C. Comm

clm/del/b

EXHIBIT D)